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Claims 11-31 remain in this application and are rejected.

Claims 11-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Marchal reference (GB 2063170) and claims 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Marchal reference.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed because Marchal does not disclose all of the features of independent claims 11 and 27.

The present invention is directed to a self-adhesive sheet for a floor covering which ensures both secure adhesion of the floor covering to the floor and residueless detachment of the floor covering from the floor. To this end, the self-adhesive sheet includes a backing layer having a top surface adapted to face the floor covering and a bottom surface adapted to face the floor; a first pressure-sensitive adhesive coating coated on the top surface of the backing layer and a second pressure-sensitive adhesive coating coated on the bottom surface of the backing layer. The second pressure-sensitive adhesive coating has a lower adhesive strength than the first pressure-sensitive adhesive coating so that the self-adhesive sheet detaches from the floor when the floor covering is pulled up. The second pressure-sensitive adhesive coating, the one on the bottom surface of the backing layer which is designed to contact the floor, is planar.

An important aspect of the claimed invention is that adhesive "coatings" are "coated" on the top and bottom surfaces of the backing layer. The coatings, being

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coated on the surfaces, by definition "cover" the surfaces of the backing layer, i.e., cover the entire surfaces of the backing layer. No portion of the top and bottom surfaces of the backing layer is uncoated or uncovered by the adhesive coatings.

Marchal does not disclose an adhesive coating coated on both surfaces of a backing layer with one of the coatings having a lower adhesive strength, the one on the surface designed to contact the floor.

Marchal shows an adhesive tape having a sheet 1 with adhesive on both surfaces. A perforated, non-sticky sheet 2 is arranged on the adhesive on the top surface and a non-perforated, non-sticky sheet 3 is arranged on the adhesive on the bottom surface. The perforations in the sheet 2 are circular so that only discrete portions of the adhesive on the top surface of the sheet 1 is exposed whereby the entire adhesive is not exposed (see Fig. 1). Instead of a sheet 2 with circular perforations, strips 131 of non-sticky material may be placed on the adhesive on the top surface of the sheet 1 leaving strips 132 of the adhesive on the top surface of the sheet 1 exposed (see Figs. 2A and 2B). The entire adhesive on the top surface of the sheet 1 is not exposed as it is covered by the strips 131.

The difference in adhesive strength of the two sides of the adhesive tape is thus achieved by reducing the area of the adhesive on the lesser sticky side, either by exposing only discrete circular regions 21 of the adhesive (as in Fig. 1), by exposing strips 132 of the adhesive (as in Figs. 2A and 2B) or by providing non-

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sticky zones 11A2 in which adhesive is not applied to the backing sheet (as in Fig. 3). In all of the possible constructions in Marchal, “[o]ne side of the sheet 11 should always have a larger surface area of adhesive than the other side” (see page 2, col. 2, lines 91-94).

In contrast to the claimed invention, Marchal does not disclose adhesive coatings coated onto the surfaces of a backing sheet and whereby a difference in adhesive strength is obtained by the properties of the coatings, not by a reduction in the area of the adhesive. Claims 11 and 27 recite the feature of “the adhesive strength of said second pressure-sensitive adhesive coating being lower than the adhesive strength of said first pressure-sensitive adhesive coating”, clearly indicating that the adhesive strength is a property of the coatings and not a result of the selective application of a non-sticky sheet to cover portions of the adhesive. For example, in the invention, the difference in adhesive strength is provided by different adhesive application rates (claim 17) or different adhesives (claim 18). In all cases, the coatings are coated onto the surfaces so that they cover the entire surfaces of the backing layer and portions of the top and bottom surfaces of the backing layer are not uncovered by adhesive.

Marchal does not teach or suggest obtaining different adhesive strengths in any manner but by reducing the surface area of adhesive between a top and bottom surface of a backing sheet. The adhesive whose surface area is reduced does not

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constitute a coating coated onto the surface since discrete portions of the surface are uncoated and uncovered. Thus, Marchal does not disclose all of the features of claims 11 and 27, namely the coatings coated on the surfaces of the backing layer with one coating having a lower adhesive strength than the other, and therefore cannot anticipate or render unpatentable the embodiments of the invention set forth in the claims.

Marchal also does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the features of the dependent claims.

For example, with respect to claims 12-15 and 31, the textile structure set forth in these claims is separate and apart from the backing layer (i.e., the self-adhesive sheet "further comprising" the textile structure (claim 12) implies that it is in addition to the backing layer set forth previously in claim 11). The textile structure may be a fabric which maintains the dimensional stability of the self-adhesive sheet during application and detachment (see page 10, line 36 to page 11, line 4 of the original specification). The Examiner points to the textile structure of the backing layer (sticky layer 1) described at page 2, col. 1, lines 31-36 of Marchal. However, in Marchal there is no separate textile structure arranged on the top or bottom surface of the backing layer.

With respect to claim 18, Marchal does not mention using adhesives having different strengths to arrive at a coating on a lower surface of the backing layer

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having a lower adhesive strength than a coating on the top surface. Rather, Marchal teaches away from this since it expresses states that the reduction in adhesive strength is obtained by reducing the surface area of the adhesive on the lower surface of the backing layer.

With respect to claim 30, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide polyethylene or polypropylene film as the backing layer because these films in particular have a smooth surface and therefore provide for a uniform attachment of the adhesive over the entire surface of the self-adhesive sheet as well as residueless detachment. Other materials, for example, structured textile fabrics, do not have a smooth surface so that a residueless detachment is not always obtained in view of the loads of these surfaces to the floor.

In view of the arguments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejections of claims 11-31 as being anticipated by or unpatentable over Marchal have been overcome and should be removed and that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

For the convenience of the Examiner, APPENDIX I is provided herewith having a complete set of pending claims with all amendments effected therein.

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In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,

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